

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTO 28005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU, ENRG, PLOS, PBOR

SUBJ: GREEK-TURKISH MEETING ON AEGEAN

1. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF GREEK MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JOHN TZOUNIS, GAVE EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN OVERVIEW OF FIRST CAGLAYANGIL/BITSIOS MEETING ON AEGEAN, WHICH WAS HELD IN NEW YORK AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 27. TZOUNIS WAS HESITANT ABOUT CHARACTERIZING MEETING AS SUCCESS OR FAILURE, BUT SAID ONE AND A HALF HOUR SESSION HAD PRODUCED LIVELY GIVE AND TAKE, AND THAT FURTHER MINISTERIAL MEETING WAS NOW FIXED FOR FRIDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 1.

2. TZOUNIS SAID GREEK SIDE HAD ENTERED SESSION IN QUEST OF ANSWERS TO TWO FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS: A) WERE TURKS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ABOUT SUBSTANTIVE CONFIDENTIAL

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AEGEAN ISSUES AND B) WERE THE TURKS CAPABLE, GIVEN

THEIR DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, IN PURSUING SUCH NEGOTIATIONS. THE TURKISH RESPONSE TO THE FIRST QUESTION WAS AFFIRMATIVE. AS FOR THE SECOND, CAGLAYANGIL CONFIRMED THAT THERE WERE DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES IN TURKEY, BUT INDICATED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BEGIN AND THAT HE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD DO ITS BEST TO MAKE THEM SUCCESSFUL. CAGLAYANGIL ALSO NOTED THAT THERE WAS OFTEN UTILITY IN NEGOTIATING WHETHER OR NOT ONE CAME TO AN EARLY AGREED SOLUTION.

3. CORE OF MEETING DEVOLVED AROUND FAMILIAR THEMES. TZOUNIS SAID FIRST QUESTION WAS WHETHER TO CONSIDER THE AEGEAN SEPARATELY OR WHETHER TO TAKE UP THE ENTIRE GREEK-TURKISH DOSSIER OF ISSUES. BOTH SIDES AGREED TO SEPARATE OUT THE AEGEAN QUESTION. IT WAS DECIDED THAT A FURTHER MEETING SHOULD BE SCHEDULED ON THE AIR OVERFLIGHT AND CLEARANCE PROBLEM. THE GREEKS THEN PROPOSED THAT SUSTAINED NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE AEGEAN DELINEATION ISSUES CAGLAYANGIL SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER THIS AND ANSWER BITSIOS ON OCTOBER 1.

4. DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR DISCUSSION, CAGLAYANGIL AGAIN ASKED BITSIOS TO WITHDRAW THE GREEK APPLICATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE. TZOUNIS MADE CLEAR THAT THE GREEKS DID NOT WANT TO WITHDRAW THE CASE, THOUGH THEY NOW RECOGNIZED THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ICJ PROCEDURES, A SIMPLE SUSPENSION WAS NOT POSSIBLE. WHAT WAS POSSIBLE WAS TO WORK OUT AN EXTENDED DELAY, IN PRESENTING THE OPPOSING MEMORANDA WHICH THE COURT WOULD REQUEST IN CONNECTION WITH ITS CONSIDERATION OF JURISDICTION. TZOUNIS SAID FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS PROPOSED THAT WHEN THE GREEK SIDE RECEIVES THIS COURT REQUEST, THEY WOULD ASK FOR A SIX-MONTH DELAY, TO WHICH COULD BE TACKED ON A FURTHER 90-DAY EXTENSION. THE TURKS COULD REQUEST SIMILAR DELAYS AMOUNTING TO NINE MONTHS. THUS, A DELAY OF AS MUCH AS 18 MONTHS COULD BE OBTAINED THROUGH THIS PROCEDURE, IF BOTH GREECE AND TURKEY AGREED TO PLAY THE GAME. CAGLAYANGIL WAS NONCOMMittal, SAYING ONLY HE CONFIDENTIAL

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WISHED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH HIS LEGAL ADVISER WHO WOULD BE ARRIVING ON THURSDAY.

5. TZOUNIS SAID THERE WAS ALSO AN EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF THE SISMIK BASED ON A STATEMENT OF THE TURKISH RESOURCE MINISTER, WHO APPARENTLY SAID RECENTLY THAT THE SISMIK MIGHT SAIL AGAIN IN APRIL. BITSIOS REFERRED TO THIS STATEMENT AND REAFFIRMED THE GREEK POSITION

THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD NOT BE CONDUCTED WHILE EXPLORATIONS WERE UNDER WAY. HE THEN PROPOSED A MORATORIUM ON EXPLORATIONS BY BOTH SIDES SO LONG AS NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED. THIS MATTER TOO WAS LEFT OPEN FOR DISCUSSION ON FRIDAY.

6. TZOUNIS AFFIRMED THAT THE GREEKS WANTED BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON SUBSTANCE TO BE ESTABLISHED QUICKLY AND TO RUN ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS. THERE WAS NO POINT IN HAVING A TWO-DAY MEETING AND SCHEDULING ANOTHER ONE TWO MONTHS LATER. THE TECHNICIANS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TOGETHER AND KEPT TOGETHER UNTIL THEY HAMMERED OUT A PROPOSAL TO GOVERNMENTS. TZOUNIS NOTED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE GREEKS WERE NO LONGER TALKING ABOUT A BEGIN UNDERLINE COMPROMISE END UNDERLINE TO THE ICJ, BUT WERE PREPARED TO REACH A SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT ON ALL OPEN ISSUES CONNECTED WITH THE DELIMITATION OF THE AEGEAN. THIS WAS WHAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAD SUGGESTED AND THIS IS THE PROCEDURE THE GREEKS WERE NOW PREPARED TO FOLLOW. THE DELIMITATION MUST, HOWEVER, BE BASED ON POLITICAL AND GEO-POLITICAL FACTORS. JOINT EXPLORATION AND JOINT-USE VENTURES OF ALL KINDS MUST FLOW FROM THE BASIC DECISION ON DELIMITATION, AND CANNOT PRECEDE IT, IN THE GREEK VIEW.

7. TZOUNIS CONCLUDED HIS PRESENTATION BY INDICATING THAT HE REMAINED SKEPTICAL THAT A REAL NEGOTIATING PROCESS COULD BE STARTED. THE TURKS SIMPLY DID NOT WANT TO NEGOTIATE; THEIR INTENTION WAS INTIMIDATION. THIS SAID TZOUNIS WAS HIS GLOOMY VIEW BASED ON 8 YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH AEGEAN QUESTIONS.
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